Frequent Asked Questions
AmeriCorps Formula Grant Application Process

1. Q: What is a MSY?

   A: MSY stands for member service year. One MSY is equivalent to full-time AmeriCorps
       member. AmeriCorps funding is contingent upon the number of MSYs requested by
       the program.

2. Q: Even though the AmeriCorps Living Allowance is not connected to an hourly rate, can you
      use an hourly rate as a recruitment tool to attract potential AmeriCorps members?

   A: No, The issue with using the hourly rate on recruitment materials is that it will lead the
      potential candidate to believe that this is an employment opportunity and not an opportunity
      for national service.

3. Q: How many planning grants will be offered during this application process?

   A: There is no set number, the Commission will identify through the review process if there is a
      need for planning grants.

4. Q: What is the maximum amount of dollars to be awarded for a planning grant?

   A: $25,000

5. Q: What types of information can you add to the grant narrative to provide evidence that your
      grant has a cost-effective solution/intervention for a community need?

   A: Of course it is always helpful to have quantitative data to support your assertion that your
       grant is cost-effective. But in regards to qualitative data, you can compare your intervention
       to a similar or different intervention that is being used in your community. You can provide
       information as to what will occur cost wise to the community if a successful intervention is
       not implemented. You may cite case studies and/or evaluation and research reports that
       provide evidence of the cost effectiveness of your solution or intervention.

6. Q: What's the difference between a lead agency and a host site?

A: The lead agency is the grant applicant agency/organization. A host site is a partner to the lead agency who wish to obtain the program's services through placement of AmeriCorps members.

7. Q: Do you need to obtain a DUNS number and register with SAM before submitting an application?

A: Yes, you need to do both before applying for an AmeriCorps Grant. To apply for a Dun & Bradstreet Universal Number System (DUNS) number, go to online http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. To register with the System for Awards Management (SAM), go to online https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM .

8. Q: What happens if I register with SAM, but I run into a delay or issue so that it is not completed by the due date of this grant?

A: It could delay the award of funding to ServeNebraska which would delay the subgrant awards. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) staff routinely check this registration to be sure it is complete before awarding funding.

9. Q: Does your grant have to support only one of the focus areas?

A: No, it can support more than one focus area or meet a pressing local need.

10. Q: Is the AmeriCorps living allowance subject to garnishment?

A: The federal share (paid by the grant funds) is not subject to garnishment. The state/private portion of the living allowance is subject to garnishment

11. Q: How is a living allowance to be paid to an AmeriCorps member?

A: The living allowance is designed to help members meet the necessary living expenses incurred while *participating* in the AmeriCorps Program. Programs must not pay a living allowance based on an hourly basis. It is not a wage and should not fluctuate based on the number of hours members serve in a given time period. Programs should pay the living allowance in increments, such as bi-weekly or according to their pay schedule.

A member, who completes his or her service early or starts service late, should receive the portion of the living allowance that would be provided for that period of participation under the program's living allowance distribution policy. The amount should not vary based on the number of hours served during a particular time period. For example, if the program is designed to run for 11 months, and the living allowance is paid monthly, a member who starts in the second month will receive 10/11ths of the total living allowance, unless the member serves a month longer than the members who started in the first month of the program.

12. Q: What is the due date for the Formula grant application to be submitted in e-Grants?
    A: **May 4, 2015 by 5:00 p.m. CST.**

13. Q: Are AmeriCorps members paid volunteers?

    A: AmeriCorps members are **not** paid volunteers. They are individuals who have chosen to become engaged in national service. Through dedicating at least one year of their life to serving their country and community, they play a unique role in a community or organization to address pressing unmet needs.

14. Q: What is the difference between Fixed Education Award Only Grant Programs (EAP) and Fixed Cost Reimbursement Grants?

    A: Fixed Education Award Only Programs (EAP) apply for a small fixed amount per MSY and Use their own resources to cover all other program expenses. EAP programs may enroll Members for any slot type and there is not a requirement that the member serve in a full-time capacity. This program is not required to pay a living allowance to members and can access all grant funds based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant.

       Full-time Fixed Amount Programs may be used to support full-time AmeriCorps members, or less than full-time members service in a full-time capacity (for example, members who serve in a full-time capacity during a summer program). These programs must enroll and Retain all members in order to access the full amount of the grant funding awarded.

15. Q: What is the difference between slots and MSYs?

    A: One MSY is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps member. A slot is the term of service an AmeriCorps member may serve such as minimum time, quarter time, half time or full time.

16. Q: What is the match requirement for a new grant application?

    A: All new programs will be required to match 24% for the first three years of their program. After year three, the match requirement will increase incrementally until year 10. At year 10 and thereafter, the match requirement will remain at 50%.

17. Q: How do I establish an e-Grants account so that I may submit my grant application?

    A: New grant applicants will need to establish an eGrants account via the Corporation for National and Community Service web-based system by accessing this link: https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account And begin the application creation process at least three weeks before the deadline.

18. Q: What is the maximum cost per MSY for this grant competition?
    A: AmeriCorps Formula Traditional Grant -- $13,730 per MSY
        Full-Time Fixed Formula AmeriCorps Grant -- $13,430 per MSY

19. Q: What are the terms of service an AmeriCorps member can serve?

    A:

Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	$12,530	$25,060
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	$13,265
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	$9,950
Quarter-time	450	n/a	$6,635
Minimum-time	300	n/a	$4,420

20. Q: What are the required attachments to the grant application and where do I submit them?

    A: The following must be emailed to Cathy Plager at **cathleen.plager@nebraska.gov** by the due date
        Include, with the subject line 2015-16 Formula Attachments:

    - Logic Model
    - Organization Chart
    - Letter(s) of Commitment from Significant Partners
    - Evaluation or Evaluation plan (if applicable)
    - Labor Concurrence (if applicable)
    - Indirect Cost Rate Determination Letter (if applicable)
    - Tier 1 Education Letters of Support (if applicable)

21. Q: What is a Federally approved Indirect Cost Agreement?

    A: In general terms, an indirect cost rate is the percentage of an organization's indirect costs to
        its direct costs and is a standardized method of charging individual programs for their share
        of indirect costs. Typically, an organization usually applies for an indirect cost rate from the
        Federal agency who provides the most funding to the organization.

22. Q: As part of the grant review process, during the clarification period whose questions do we
       receive? Outside reviewers or ServeNebraska staff?

    A: During the clarification period for formula grant applications, you will receive clarification
        questions compiled from both outside reviewer and staff review.

23. Q: If an organization utilizes federal work study dollars, can you still apply for grant funds?
    A: Yes. Ensure that if you use other federal grant dollars for AmeriCorps match, that those

Federal match dollars are documented in the other federal grant and approved.

24. Q: Can I still have minimum time (300 hours) AmeriCorps members even though Serve-Nebraska recommends not to use these positions.

    A: Yes you can. If minimum time members are budgeted, it must be clear in the grant Narrative how these members will be made to feel as part of the program's AmeriCorps Team and understand that they are part of a larger national service movement. If members are recruited and serving during the times that ServeNebraska has the AmeriCorps Conference or Symposium these members are should also be in attendance.

25. Q: What is the total amount of Formula grant funds available for the State of Nebraska?
    A: $1,115,467.00

26. Q: What is Professional Corps and how does the program work?

    A: A Professional Corps program is a type of fixed amount grant. This grant is open to organizations that plan to operate full-time Professional Corps programs. Professional Corps members are paid the salary levels of the profession rather than the living allowance otherwise specified for AmeriCorps members; the salary/living allowance is not included in the grant application budget. Professional Corps members are placed in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Professional Corps programs must also follow the AmeriCorps regulations. Potential applicants need to read and understand the Notice of Funding Opportunity, the Application Instructions, and the AmeriCorps regulations before submitting an application. (See http://www.compactnh.org/americorps/wediko/ or http://www.tc.columbia.edu/pcfellows/index.asp?Id=AmeriCorps&Info=About+AmeriCorps for examples of funded Professional Corps programs.)

27. Q: What are the advantages of fixed amount grants?

    A: Under fixed-amount grants, grantees have less financial reporting. Fixed-amount grants are exempt from the OMB Cost Principles, which means that the amount CNCS awards is not based on a line item budget and programs are not required to maintain documentation to

the allowability of expenditures charged to federal or matching grant funds. Other OMB requirements still apply. (See Question 15) In short, the advantages are:

- Cost Principles do not apply
- No tracking or documentation of cost sharing is required
- Budgets are not required during application process
- Limited, if any, financial reporting to the Corporation is required; the FFR (SF 425) is not required

For more information on Fixed grants, please access the CNCS FAQ at:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FAQs_forFixedAmountGrants42613.pdf

28. Q: Which NOFA is the correct NOFA to select in e-Grants?

    A: **NOFA:** FY 2015 AmeriCorps State Commission (New and Continuations)
       Due Date: 01/21/2015

29. Q: Do administrative funds count towards the total cost of a member MSY and do I have to request those funds?

    A: Yes, administrative funds count towards the total cost of a member MSY and Serve-Nebraska requires that you request the federal 5% of administrative costs in your program budget.

30. Q: Do I have to provide match for each budget line item?

    A: You are not required to include matching dollars on each budget line item. The bottom line is that your program provides enough match that meets the percentage of required match for your program.